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Mattocks rarin' to go for Caps

Striker's feeling sharp after July knee surgery, and he could return to lineup this weekend PAGE 15

Development LEEDing the way

City OK's $200-million project that will see 30-storey tower built to green-friendly LEED standards PAGE 3

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Gay Russian to show his Pride in New Westminster

LGBTQ. A man who fled persecution in his homeland revels in his newfound freedom, accepting an offer to be parade co-grand marshal

Andrey Samstov could hardly believe his eyes on Aug. 4 when he saw, for the first time in his life, hundreds of thousands of people openly celebrating the LGBTQ community in Vancouver's West End.

Less than two weeks earlier the 28-year-old, who is gay and deaf, had stepped off a plane from Russia, where in 2011 he was arrested after unfurling a rainbow flag at a Pride parade in Moscow that turned into a riot.

"I kept thinking I was going to get arrested," he said of his first Pride experience in Vancouver, during an interview facilitated by an interpreter on Tuesday.

"I thought, The police are going to grab me, because I've been arrested before, and it's a sense of freedom here, so the fact that I'm here in Canada, I'm just so proud. It's just so different."

Samstov is also ecstatic to have been asked to serve as the co-grand marshal at this Saturday's Pride Festival and Hills and Heels Walk in New Westminster. He has been living in New West in a shelter for immigrants while pursuing a claim for refugee status.

His warm reception in B.C. over the past few weeks stands in stark contrast to the difficult journey that brought him here.

In Russia he was socially ostracized, physically abused by police and threatened with expulsion from high school because of his sexual orientation. His father threw him out of the house and disowned him when he was 22.

"You're fearful that you're going to get killed, you're fearful that you're going to get persecuted," he said of his adolescent years.

"It wasn't a matter of coming out, it was a matter of being found out."

The law President Vladimir Putin passed in June outlawing gay "propaganda" for "non-traditional sexual relations" under threat of steep fines or jail time was the final straw.

Samstov's lawyer Rob Hughes says his client has a strong case for claiming asylum in Canada, given the hostile political climate in Russia.

Samstov said he hopes to receive a work visa soon so he can get a job as a computer specialist and find a place to live.

KATE WEBB/METRO

Andrey Samstov is seeking asylum in Canada after Russia passed strict anti-gay legislation in June and he bid a tearful goodbye to members of his family. KATE WEBB/METRO

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City issues permit for $200M 'green' tower by defunct VSE

The Exchange. Building designed by renowned architect will create 400 construction jobs

EMILY JACKSON
emily.jackson@metronews.ca

For $200 million, Vancouver's Old Stock Exchange is getting a makeover and a new neighbour.

The city approved Monday a development permit for a 30-storey office tower at Howe and Pender dubbed The Exchange, the first to be built in Canada by real-estate investment giant Credit Suisse.

The developer will build the tower to LEED Platinum standards, though it only needed to meet LEED Gold standards to land the rezoning.

It was approved in November 2012 amid the usual complaints from neighbours of its "preposterous" size, not enough notice and without "proper heritage conservation."

The tower will use half the energy of traditional buildings of the same size and lower tenants' operating costs, according to the company.

In another Canadian first, the developer will restore the heritage stock exchange, built in 1929, to LEED Platinum standards. It will keep the shell of the building, which housed the trading floor of the defunct Vancouver Stock Exchange.

"We believe in Vancouver's economy and its future," Credit Suisse director Herbert Meier said in a statement. "We believe in supporting the City of Vancouver's vision to become the world's 'greenest' city by 2020."

It's not the only downtown office building vying for a green reputation. Telus boasts that its under-construction towers at Robson and Georgia will be among the first to use energy from its data centre for heating and cooling the air and water.

Designed by architect Harry Gugger, known for Beijing's Bird's Nest Stadium and London's Tate Modern Gallery, The Exchange will create 400 construction jobs.

While the tower will have room for 1,700 office workers upon completion, the developer has yet to announce a major tenant for the project. At 4.6 per cent, vacancy rates for downtown office space are the highest they've been since 2011, according to Avison Young's mid-year 2013 market report.

Shovels will hit the ground in October with construction slated to be complete in 2017.

A rendering of The Exchange at 475 Howe St., which is scheduled to be completed by 2017. CONTRIBUTED

Job action looms as CUPE BC workers seek wage hike

Contract talks have broken off between the B.C. government and thousands of public school workers, the union announced Tuesday, warning of a possible strike in the fall.

The Canadian Union of Public Employees, which represents about 27,000 education assistants, clerical staff, trades workers, bus drivers and other staff, claims the province came to negotiations without being ready to bargain.

Member outrage

"They're frustrated that we've had three false starts to negotiating, and the clock is ticking."

CUPE BC rep Colin Pawson, who says the government has not taken bargaining seriously

The main issue in the labour negotiations appears to be wages, with the province sticking to its so-called co-operative gains mandate. The bargaining policy, which applies throughout the provincial government, dictates that wage increases are possible but only if corresponding savings can be found elsewhere, such as through increases in productivity.

The union says only a "fully funded wage increase" will end the dispute, which comes four years since the workers last received a boost to their pay.

"If the government doesn't show a commitment to bargaining, our members will take full-scale job action," the union's Colin Pawson said in a news release.

Pawson insisted the union came to the table with ideas to save money, but he said the government negotiator wasn't prepared for bargaining.

Peter Cameron, who the province appointed earlier this year to lead negotiations with teachers and other workers in the school system, issued a statement in which he said he's optimistic both sides can agree on a deal to avoid a strike or lockout. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Suspects sought after Oliver bomb blast

RCMP investigation. Device exploded under empty car in residential driveway

EMILY JACKSON
emily.jackson@metronews.ca

Pieces of metal blasted through two garages after a bomb exploded underneath an unoccupied vehicle in the rear driveway of an Okanagan home early Sunday morning.

Oliver RCMP are searching for a motive and suspects in the 2 a.m. explosion, which they were alerted to after a woman found a piece of metal that apparently ripped through her garage wall in the 600 block of Earl Crescent.

Investigators discovered significant damage to the vehicle's two rear wheels and the under carriage, along with a scorched cement driveway and pieces of metal, rubber and other material strewn across the area.

"The damage appears to be consistent with an explosion of some significance going off under the vehicle," B.C. RCMP spokesman Sgt. Peter Thiessen said in a statement. "It does not appear that any local residents were injured in the explosion."

Anyone with information regarding this incident is asked to call the Oliver RCMP at 250-498-3422 or Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-8477.

Follow Emily Jackson on Twitter @theemilyjackson

The IED that exploded under a car in Oliver on Sunday around 2 a.m.
COURTESY RCMP

Chilliwack

Province sees 4th motorcycle fatality in 2 days

Yet another motorcyclist has been killed in a crash on B.C. roads — the fourth person to die in a motorcycle crash in two days.

The latest fatal crash happened Tuesday in Chilliwack, when a 72-year-old man from Pitt Meadows lost control when attempting to stop as he approached slower-moving traffic.

A news release says the man slid into an SUV that was stopped in traffic and died at the scene.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Politics

Sterk stepping down as Green party chief

B.C. Green party Leader Jane Sterk says she plans to retire on a high following a provincial election that saw the Greens elect their first-ever member to the legislature, even though Sterk lost in her own riding.

Sterk announced the decision on Twitter, telling her 2,200 followers she had reached her best-before date and was looking for a new adventure.

She'll formally resign at the party's annual general meeting on Aug. 24.

CKNW/THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Drunk driving. Court tosses woman's roadside ban

B.C.'s Supreme Court has thrown out a roadside suspension issued to a woman who the court said had her rights to a second breathalyzer test violated, but the province's watchdog for motorists says court challenges to the province's tough drinking-and-driving laws are to be expected.

Sam MacLeod, B.C.'s superintendent of motor vehicles, said in a statement Tuesday that his office is looking into the court's decision on the roadside suspension, but it will need time to decide how to move forward.

"What I can say is that we have always expected challenges to our tough approach to drinking (and) driving, and we remain committed to continuing to be both effective and fair, while being tough on those people who choose to drink and drive and put their lives and the lives of others at risk," MacLeod said.

The B.C. Supreme Court case involved Angela Lichun Buhr, who was pulled over at about 2 a.m. this past February after "a report was made of erratic driving."

Buhr told the officer she hadn't been drinking, but her friends had. But the officer smelled alcohol and asked Buhr to blow into a breathalyzer.

Buhr took two tests, which is her right to do. While the first showed a failed reading, the other did not register and she was not given a chance to try again, according to court documents.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Quoted

"To date, an estimated 143 lives have been saved as a result of our legislation, which amounts to a 51 per cent reduction in alcohol-related deaths."

Sam MacLeod, B.C.'s superintendent of motor vehicles

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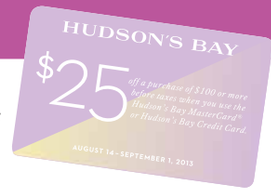
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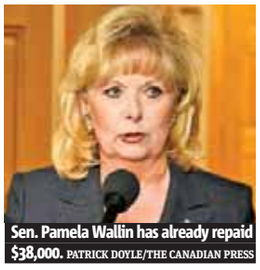
Senate sends Wallin audit to RCMP



Sen. Pamela Wallin has already repaid $38,000. PATRICK DOYLE/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Expects $82,000 back. Senator not allowed to write off travel costs for next 12 months

Partisan Conservative fundraisers, a short hop to catch a flight to the Caribbean and glitzy awards galas are just some of the expenses Sen. Pamela Wallin billed to taxpayers under the guise of Senate business.

The Saskatchewan senator now faces the prospect of an RCMP probe, as well as paying back more than $82,000 after an audit flagged a host of inappropriate travel claims dating back to her very first days in the upper chamber.

Wallin's ability to travel on the taxpayers' dime will be restricted for at least the next 12 months, Senate committee members said Tuesday.

"I believe I can speak for my colleagues on both sides when I say that we found aspects of the Deloitte report very troubling," said Liberal Sen. George Furey.

The former broadcaster has called the audit "flawed and unfair," and her attorney has complained to auditing firm Deloitte about leaks of confidential information.

"Virtually nothing has happened ... which has not in some form or another found its way into the media," wrote Terrence O'Sullivan.

Deloitte auditors flagged $121,348 in inappropriate expenses and called for further review of nearly $21,000 in additional claims. Wallin has already repaid $38,000.

The audit also found that changes had been made retroactively to entries in Wallin's electronic calendar once the audit process had begun.

Wallin says the changes were the result of advice she received in order to co-operate with the audit. Conservative Sen. David Tkachuk said he only told Wallin to omit irrelevant information.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Calgary. Thieves dump out ashes of car-crash victim

Car prowlers on the hunt for loose change and other valuables have taken something from a grieving Calgary mother that money can't buy.

Colleen Ransom had kept her daughter Emma's ashes in her pickup truck since the 19-year-old student and three friends were killed in a 2009 car crash.

On Aug. 2, several vehicles were broken into on Ransom's street, and someone removed a green pouch with Emma's remains inside and emptied it onto the rain-soaked street.

Ransom was only able to salvage a few ashes and came forward Tuesday pleading with the public to help police nab the burglars responsible.

Colleen Ransom with a picture of her daughter and the pouch of her ashes. JEREMY NOLAIS/METRO IN CALGARY

Also stolen was a green rain jacket that belonged to Emma.

JEREMY NOLAIS/METRO IN CALGARY

Caught red handed?

Doctor accused of stealing drugs out of smuggler's gut

Russian police have arrested a surgeon who they say stole some of the heroin he had been called on to extract from the stomach of a suspected drug mule.

Police in the Siberian region of Krasnoyarsk say that after investigators discovered some of the drugs were missing, they searched the surgeon and found a packet containing five grams of heroin hidden in his clothes.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Food safety. Coca-Cola ads to defend artificial sweeteners

Coca-Cola plans to run its first ad defending the safety of artificial sweeteners on Wednesday, a move that comes as the company looks to stem declining sales of diet soda.

The print ad is set to run in USA Today in the Atlanta area, followed by the Atlanta Journal Constitution on Thursday and the Chicago Tribune next week. It says that diet drinks can help people manage their weight and stresses the scientific evidence showing the safety of aspartame, more commonly known under the NutraSweet brand name.

The ad represents the next phase of a campaign Coca-Cola Co. launched in January to push back at critics who blame its sugary drinks for spiking obesity rates.

The first wave of ads outlined the company's commitment to fighting obesity and pointed to the many diet options it offers.

Now Coca-Cola is trying to reassure people that those lower-calorie drinks aren't harmful. "Coke is trying to get out front and proactively defend these diet sweeteners," said John Sicher, editor of Beverage Digest.

Sales of diet sodas are falling at a faster rate than regular sodas in the U.S., according to Beverage Digest. The declines come even though the U.S. Food and Drug Administration says aspartame may be safely used in foods as a sweetener. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Market Minute

DOLLAR 96.68¢ (-0.38¢)

TSX 12,642.19 (+47.92)

OIL $106.83 US (+72¢)

GOLD $1,320.50 US (-$13.70)

Natural gas: $3.30 US (-1¢)
Dow Jones: 15,451.01 (+31.33)

Railway in Quebec tragedy has its licence suspended

Montreal. Federal regulator made call after reviewing MMA's liability insurance

An engineer checks the engine of a Montreal, Maine & Atlantic locomotive on July 11 outside the company's offices in the town of Farnham, Que. The Canadian Transportation Agency announced Tuesday that it's revoking the certificate of fitness for the embattled railway company. GRAHAM HUGHES/THE CANADIAN PRESS

The railway at the centre of the Lac-Mégantic, Que., train disaster will have its operating licence suspended in Canada, a severe blow to an already crippled company.

The Canadian Transportation Agency announced Tuesday that it's revoking the certificates of fitness for the Montreal, Maine & Atlantic Railway Ltd. and its Canadian subsidiary, Montreal, Maine & Atlantic Canada Co.

The arm's-length federal regulator says it made the decision after reviewing the railway's third-party liability insurance following the fiery July 6 derailment that killed 47 people and wiped out part of downtown Lac-Mégantic.

"We have concluded that (the coverage) is not adequate, thereby we have no choice but to suspend their certificate of fitness," said agency spokeswoman Jacqueline Bannister. "We have given them until Aug. 20 to conclude their railway activities in Canada."

The agency said it had advised the railway that it must maintain at least the same amount of third-party liability coverage it had before the derailment. But it said MMA's insurance broker indicated the aggregate coverage had been cut in half since the derailment. THE CANADIAN PRESS

HYPERLOOP CREATOR HAS CREDIBILITY

JUST SAYIN'

Paul Sullivan
metronews.ca

How cool is this:

A transport system that gets people from San Francisco to Los Angeles in half an hour using currently available technology?

It's called Hyperloop, the latest crazy plan from Elon Musk, the visionary who has so far given the world PayPal, the Tesla electric car and SpaceX, the world's only private space program.

Hyperloop is a solar-powered, lightweight, pneumatic system that proposes to move people and cars from one destination to another at 1,000 km/h. The tubes would follow California's I-5 and, unlike the rapid-rail system now in the planning process, farmers would still be able to plant their crops under the columns.

Any way you look at it — cost, speed, efficiency, access, land use — Musk's estimated $10-billion bright idea compares favourably to the now-planned $70-billion-to-$100-billion train that would poke along at about 320 kilometres an hour.

So why is everyone dumping all over it? Typical of the expert opinion on Hyperloop is Richard White, a professor of American history at Stanford and author of Railroaded: The Transcontinentals and the Making of Modern America.

"It doesn't seem plausible to me," he told The New York Times. "I'm suspicious about everything, especially cost."

I'm not sure what Richard White thought when Musk announced SpaceX in 2002, but I don't think there was anyone who really believed it would be the first privately held company to take cargo to the International Space Station a mere 10 years later.

Elon Musk has visionary cred. While the tenured professors of negativity mutter in their beards, Elon Musk is busy designing the future. Along with a few others such as the recently departed Steve Jobs, Google's Sergey Brin and tech-genius emeritus Bill Gates.

Not everything these guys dream up works. Landfills are littered with Newton PDAs and Vista software bundles, and Google seems to shut down as many services as it launches, but look at what they've brought to the table. Modern wonders of the world:

- A place where you can go and ask any question about anything and get a million answers.
- Programs that allow you to write, calculate, communicate, design, create and connect, all from your lap.
- Small devices that fit into your pocket that allow you to store, organize and access as many beautiful words, pictures and melodies as you can stand.

Not to mention a rocket-ship company that has single-handedly saved the International Space Station, our seed pod to the stars.

Sadly, for every Elon Musk, there are 100 Richard Whites. Eminent, expert and enervating. People who can tell you how it won't work. Prophets of failure.

We need more Elon Musks, people who look at grinding challenges such as gridlock and climate change and see opportunity. More than that: They see excitement. Their eyes sparkle.

It's like corny old Buzz Lightyear likes to say: To infinity and beyond!

Why would we want to go anywhere else?

ZOOM

Rustic rock villa meets urban upset

IMAGINECHINA/REX FEATURES

One castle in the sky not wanted

A mysterious Chinese medicine practitioner has been ordered to dismantle a rocky mountain villa built on top of a 26-storey block of apartments in Beijing.

Neighbours say Prof. Zhang Biqing began to illegally build the huge rock dwelling six years ago and they live in fear that the weight will cause the building to collapse. **METRO**

Costly

$3.5M

At 27,349 yuan ($4,468 US) per square metre for property in the Chinese capital, and 800 square metres (8,600 square feet) of rocky terrain, Zhang's luxury rooftop pad could be worth more than $3.5 million US.

The faux mountain home is covered by fake rockeries, real trees and bushes, and is located in one of the city's more upmarket areas.

Unlicensed add-ons and alterations to homes is a common practice among China's wealthiest.

15-day deadline for demolition

The suites beneath Zhang's already suffer from cracks and leaking roofs. One neighbour had complained to the local urban management office, but Zhang allegedly hired thugs to beat him up and he then moved away. Following media exposure, the local urban management office has now ordered Zhang to dismantle the property within 15 days or it will be torn down. **METRO**

Quoted

"Since I dare to live here, I am not worried about complaints. Famous people come to my place and sing. How can you stop them? I used to worry that the house might be too much but I never expected this much attention."
Zhang told Beijing Morning News

Clickbait

ANDREW FIFIELD
andrew.fifield@metronews.ca

Are you suffering from the affliction of having way too much available data on your phone plan? Nip that problem in the bud with these recent online multiplayer gems. Besides, it's more fun to play together.

Ultima Forever

What's being billed as the App Store's largest free-to-play RPG has been a blast in the days since it launched. There's no cross-platform play, sadly, but the developers are promising it. (iOS/Free)

Finest Hour

This turn-based, First World War-era tank warfare with a board-game feel has been my favourite release for quite a while. Manage your fleet of armoured war machines, with special care to positioning that exploits the weaknesses of your opponents' tanks while defending against the vulnerabilities of your own. Easily worth the cost. (iOS/$0.99)

Disc Drivin'

OK, so there's nothing new about Disc Drivin', but I've recently rediscovered it buried among my app folders. A turn-based racing game where the vehicle of choice is a weighted disc you flick around a tricky track. (iOS/$1.99)

Letters

RE: Ontario to examine pesticides as possible cause of bee deaths, published July 9

It was good to see a couple of articles back in July on the problems honeybees are having. Keep up the good work. I think the public needs to be made aware of how the honeybee has become an essential part of modern agriculture. Without it, the large crops of fruits, vegetables, nuts and even cotton wouldn't be pollinated.

The U.S. lost so many honeybee colonies that every year the country imports honeybees from Australia in order to satisfy the demand from farmers.

Can you imagine having to hand pollinate the flowers on a pear tree in order to get a pear to grow? Can you imagine the cost of the fruit? Well it is already happening. There is a province in China that no longer has honeybees due to the use of pesticides and the pear trees have to be hand pollinated.

A few months ago the EU banned neonicotinoids for a couple of years. Hopefully this will help to slow or reverse the trend of the declining honeybee populations.

When a bug eats a leaf, it dies. When a honeybee takes pollen and nectar to its hive, it feeds this poison to the brood as well as the adult bees.

Derrick To, Vancouver

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU: Send us your comments: vancouverletters@metronews.ca

metro

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You're not paranoid — movies on espionage are good business

I spy. Opening this weekend, Paranoia won't be the last in a long list of movies about double crossing businesses

IN FOCUS
Richard Crouse
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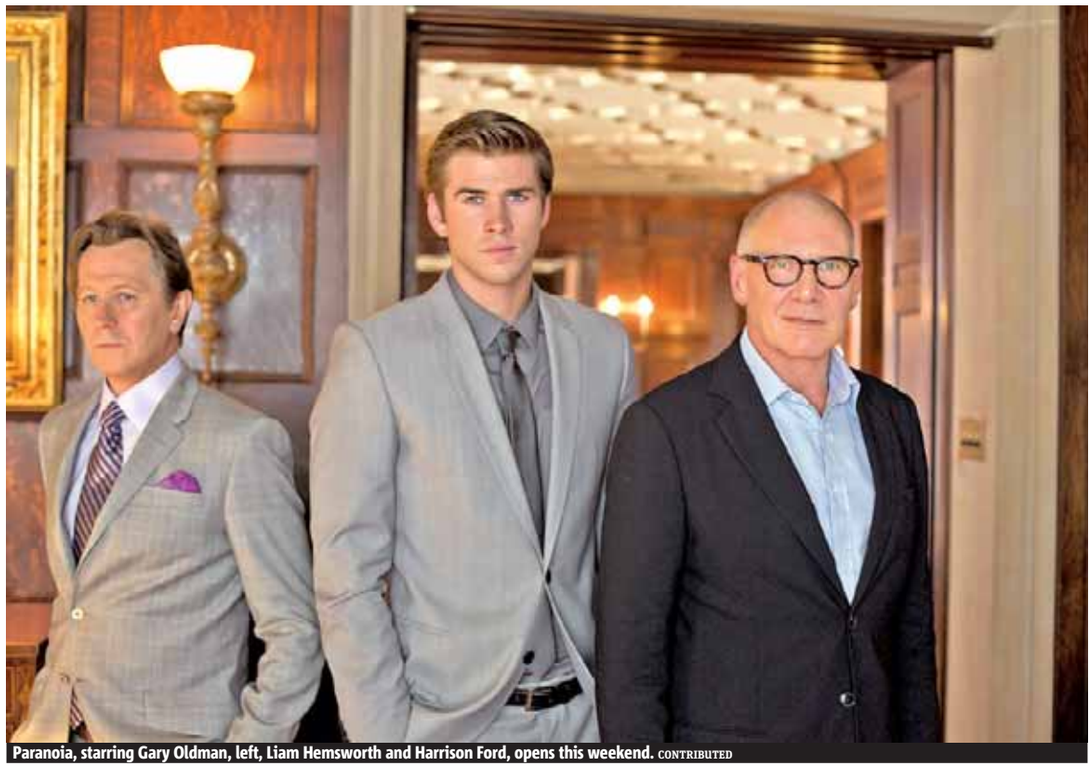

Paranoia, starring Gary Oldman, left, Liam Hemsworth and Harrison Ford, opens this weekend. CONTRIBUTED

The word espionage is most commonly used in relation to spy stories. It conjures up images of James Bond, exotic locations and wild action scenes. But in many movies espionage has little to do with shaken not stirred martinis and Bond girls, and more to do with corporate secrets and intrigue.

This weekend, Paranoia explores the world of big business espionage as Adam Cassidy (Liam Hemsworth) finds himself doing dangerous double duty in the billion dollar world of high tech.

As an entry level employee, his boss Nicholas Wyatt (Gary Oldman) promises him a corner office, among other things, if he will spy on rival tech giant Jock Goddard (Harrison Ford).

That movie is set in the world of bits and bytes but corporate espionage comes in as many styles as that ergonomically designed chair in the CEO's office.

As the title would suggest, the movie Duplicity is ripe with lies and underhanded dealings. Julia Roberts and Clive Owen are former government spies now working in the private sector. Despite being intimately involved, they work for rival shampoo companies. It's a romantic comedy about undercover activities. Imagine if Rock Hudson and Doris Day had starred in Mission Impossible and you get the idea.

Genetics is the currency in New Rose Hotel, a 1999 Christopher Walken and Willem Dafoe film based on a short story by William Gibson. They play corporate moles hired to influence a Japanese bio-engineering expert to defect from one corporation to another. To seduce Dr. Hiroshi (Yoshitaka Amano) they hire a prostitute (Asia Argento) to win his affections. The plan doesn't work, and neither does the movie, really, but it's worth a look for the flamboyant performances from Walken and Dafoe.

Finally, back in the world of high tech espionage, the Ben Affleck thriller Paycheck is a good little movie released at the wrong time. Wedged between Gigli and Jersey Girl, it came out at the height of Bennifer and the nadir of audience interest in Affleck as an actor.

Based on a Philip K Dick short story, Affleck plays Jennings, a genius programmer hired by corporations to reverse engineer new products, recreating them anew. His work is so secretive that after he's done, his memory is wiped clean. The chicanery really begins when his employer (Aaron Eckhart) pulls a double cross, leaving Jennings with no money, no memory and a world of trouble.

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METRO DISH

OUR TAKE ON THE WORLD OF CELEBRITIES

The Word

Miley Cyrus knows she is white, m'kay?

THE WORD
Dorothy Robinson
scene@metronews.ca

Miley Cyrus, who is white, teamed up with French Montana, who is Moroccan, for a remix of his hit song Ain't Worried 'Bout Nothin'.

A portion of the collaboration, which was shot on an iPhone video, was put out onto the Interwebs on Monday. In the grainy video, Cyrus raps about "having thick chicks" and "stuntin' during Fashion Week."

In response to the clip, comments poured in — many of which were not so nice and seemed quite racially motivated — to which Cyrus replied via Twitter, "i know what color my skin is. you can stop with the friendly reminders b—."

It's been very interesting to watch the singer, who brought twerking into the mainstream, shed her Disney background and play her career and artistic self the way she wants to play it — no genres, no boundaries, no rules. Good for you, Miley.

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Life can be one heck of a ride, especially on these coasters

Amusement. Summer may be winding down, but there's still plenty of time to get your heart racing with these rides

JULIE KAYZERMAN
Metro World News in New York City

Pete Trabucco has a pretty thrilling job if you ask us — he's an amusement park expert. Yes, that's an actual job. Jealous? The author of America's Top Roller Coasters and Amusement Parks gave us the 411 on the best roller coasters in the United States for you to see this summer.

There is still plenty of coaster-weather left this year. ISTOCK IMAGES

Hottest new coaster

Gatekeeper Cedar Point, Sandusky, Ohio cedarpoint.com

Trabucco calls Cedar Point the "Mecca for all roller coaster enthusiasts." Gatekeeper is "one of the most anticipated rides that's coming out of that location," he says. "It's an absolutely amazing wing coaster in which you are actually suspended on the other side of this entire track," he says. "You are just flying with nothing but just air."

Cedar Point has 16 coasters, including Gatekeeper. It is also the only amusement park to have four coasters taller than 200 feet, including Top Thrill Dragster, the second tallest roller coaster in the world.

Tallest thriller

Kingda Ka Six Flags Great Adventure, Jackson, N.J.. sixflags.com/greatadventure

Going from zero to 128 m.p.h. in about four seconds, this steel accelerator reaches 456 feet before it drops 418 feet at a 90-degree angle.

Best wooden coaster

El Toro Six Flags Great Adventure, Jackson, N.J.

This ride became the first wooden coaster to use a cable lift instead of a chain lift, allowing for a much faster and steeper ride. El Toro has one of the steepest wooden-coaster drops and was voted the 2013 No. 1 wooden coaster by Amusement Today.

Best Florida coaster

Dragon Challenge Harry Potter World, Universal Park, Orlando, Fla. universalorlando.com/harrypotter

"The Dragon Challenge is basically two coasters that actually come tip to tip," says Trabucco. "When you're on the ride you actually almost touch toes as you loop the loop simultaneously."

Best kiddie coasters

"Any park that you go to, you're going to find at least one or two kid rides that are really well worth going on," Trabucco says. "If you're an adult and you're like me, you're not going to fit, but you hold your breath." Trabucco recommends:

- **Sesame Place Langhorne, Pa.** sesameplace.com
- **Walt Disney World Resort, Lake Buena Vista, Fla.** disneyworld.disney.go.com
- **Runaway Mine Train Six Flags Great Adven- ture, Jackson, N.J.** sixflags.com/greatadventure

World's largest

Safari expansion nets Six Flags' new title

Move over Disney. Six Flags Great Adventure is now the world's largest park thanks to its newest expansion ride, Safari Off Road Adventure.

The Jackson, N.J., theme park reimagined its 38-year-old Wild Safari park during the off-season, outfitting the 350-acre, 1,200-animal preserve with 18 open-air safari vehicles customized from surplus army trucks.

"It's a worthwhile, interesting attraction," says Paul Ruben, industry expert and North American editor of Park World magazine.

By merging the Safari reserve with the existing Great Adventure property, the park is now 510 acres — surpassing Walt Disney World's Animal Kingdom (500 acres) as the world's largest theme park.

CHRIS LONGO

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Making a vacation home your own — even if it isn't

Rent it. That mansion on the beach you've been lusting for may not be within your price range — but you can pretend

JULIA FURLAN
Metro World News in New York City

Jet-setting around town and living out of a suitcase may seem glamorous, but it gets old fast.

There's something special about crossing the threshold of a house — the kind of house you don't usually live in — and making it "home" for a few days. Robert Milne, president of WyndhamVacation Rentals North America — a company specializing in luxury house rentals — gave us some tips about making yourself at home while you're on vacation.

What kind of folks usually go for rental houses?

Typically, our demographic, as you can probably imagine, is a family. But usually it's more than just two adults. It's the mom and dad and maybe the uncle or a friend, because renting gives people an opportunity to invite other friends or family that they might not otherwise.

What makes renting a house different from staying in a hotel?

I'm a perfect example of it, actually. (My family) rents vacation houses when we travel, and it's funny how over the years different members of the family invited friends who we never would have thought of inviting if we were going to stay in a hotel. It's like, even though we're good friends, I'm not going to invite you to stay in a hotel with me — but it's different when it is a house. Plus, if you invite your friend along, the cost splits amongst a lot of people and makes it a good value.

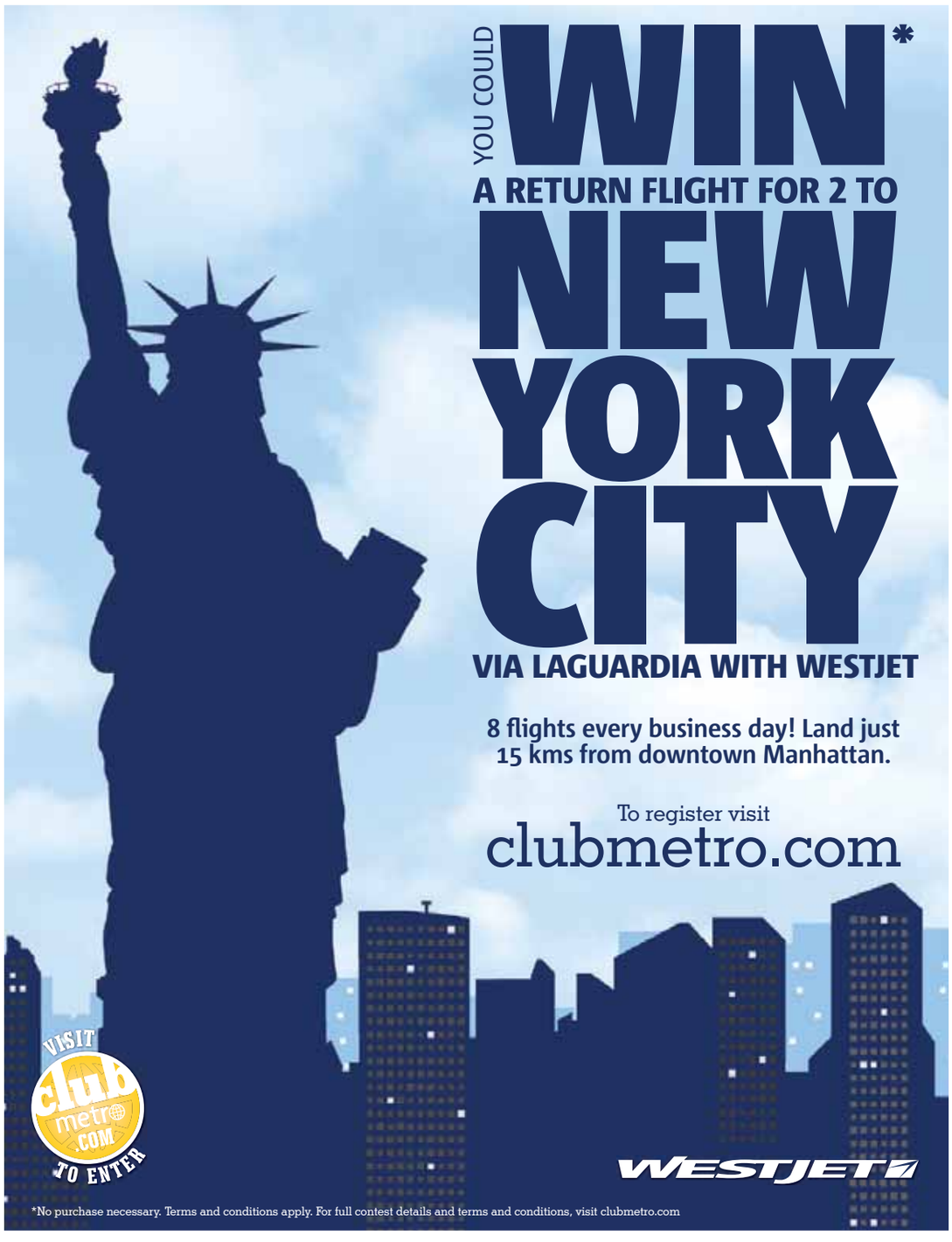
Sites like VRBO, Airbnb and HomeAway make it easy to rent houses.

What makes your company different?

One of the bigger differences between the professionally managed properties versus houses managed by owners is that a lot of the owners don't have the sophistication of software to make sure that double-bookings and other problems don't happen. We came up with a "renter's bill of rights" that we could stand behind as a company. It is a service pledge that promises high standards of customer service, real-time booking, accurate property portrayals and diverse properties with clean, regularly inspected units.

Advice

- **DO.** Ask questions beforehand. "We had one guest who showed up at a vacation rental and brought all of their sheets and towels, and they were floored to learn that the house already had linens. I think a lot of it is doing your research and making sure that you find out what amenities there are, too."
- **DON'T.** Obsess about work."I always remind guests that there is so much to do and see that they should avoid bringing too much work with them. In my experience, staying at a rental means it becomes your home away from home .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A crepe isn't a crepe without a plum

These crepes are delicious for breakfast, brunch or dessert. The plums are cooked with star anise until just soft and complemented by the cardamom in the whipped cream.

Ingredients

- 3 eggs, lightly beaten
- 500 ml (2 cups) milk
- 50 ml (1/4 cup) melted butter, plus extra for cooking crepes
- 250 ml (1 cup) all-purpose flour
- 5 ml (1 tsp) salt

Plums

- 15 ml (1 tbsp) vegetable oil
- 6 blue plums, pitted and quartered
- 50 ml (1/4 cup) granulated sugar
- 250 ml (1 cup) semi-dry white wine (such as Riesling)
- 8 whole star anise pods
- Zest and juice of 1 lemon

Whipped Cream

- 250 ml (1 cup) whipping cream (35 per cent)
- 75 ml (1/3 cup) liquid honey
- 1 ml (1/4 tsp) ground cardamom

1. In a large bowl, whisk eggs, milk, 50 ml (1/4 cup) melted butter, flour and salt until no lumps remain. Cover and refrigerate for at least 2 hours before making crepes.

2. Plums: In a large heavy-bottomed skillet, heat oil over medium heat. Brown cut side of plums for about 2 minutes per side; sprinkle with sugar. Add wine, star anise pods and lemon zest to skillet and bring to a boil; reduce heat to medium. Cook until plums are soft, about 4 minutes. With a slotted spoon, remove plums to a heatproof bowl.

3. Bring syrup to boil; boil until reduced by half, 5 to 6 minutes. Add lemon juice to taste; pour over plums. Cover and let cool to room temperature.

4. Crepes: Heat a 20-cm (8-inch) non-stick skillet over medium heat. Brush pan with melted butter. Pour 75 ml (1/3 cup) batter into centre of pan, tilting pan to cover bottom thinly. Return to heat for about 1 minute or until bottom is lightly browned. Using a spatula, flip crepe over and brown other side. Remove to a plate. Repeat with remaining batter, buttering pan if needed. (Refrigerate crepes if not using immediately.)

5. Whipped Cream: Using an electric mixer, whip cream on medium until thickened slightly. Slowly add honey and cardamom, whipping until stiff peaks form, about 2 minutes. Keep refrigerated until ready to use.

6. Remove star anise pods from plums. Place crepes on cutting board. Divide plum mixture among 8 crepes, spooning mixture onto one half. Fold crepes over. Carefully transfer to serving plates; garnish with whipped cream and a star anise pod. THE CANADIAN PRESS/ CHEF TAFIK SHEHATA FOR FOODLAND ONTARIO

Plum Crepes With Cardamom and Honey Whipped Cream

This recipe serves eight. COURTESY THE CANADIAN PRESS

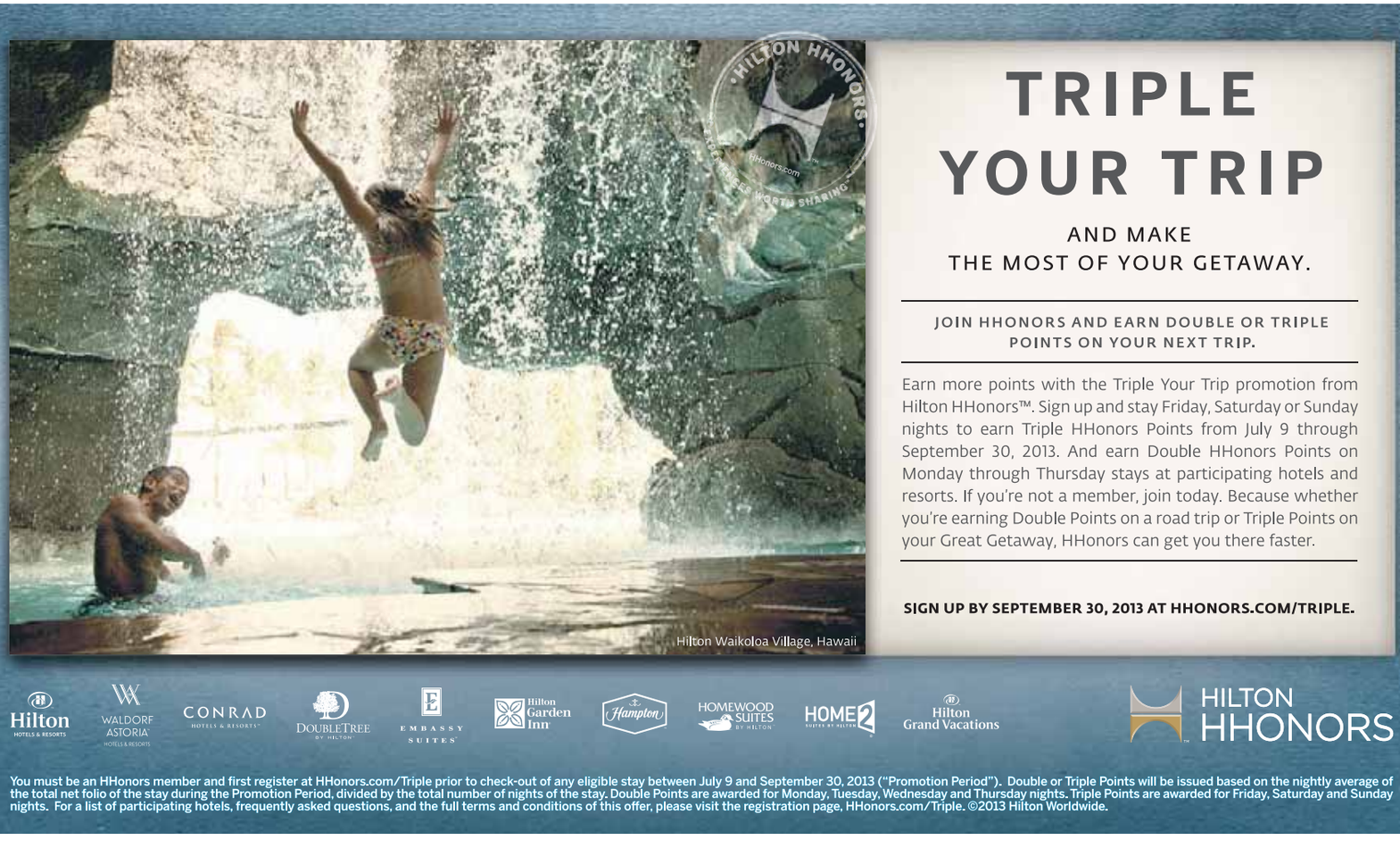
Drink of the Week

Breakfast of Champs

Kick off any hot summer day with this refreshing punch. It's simple and delicious, with lemon juice, simple syrup and soda water.

- 8.5 oz Belvedere Vodka
- 4 oz lemon juice
- 3 oz simple syrup
- 16 oz soda water

Add all ingredients into a glass jug. Garnish with lemon slices and mint. COURTESY BELVEDERE VODKA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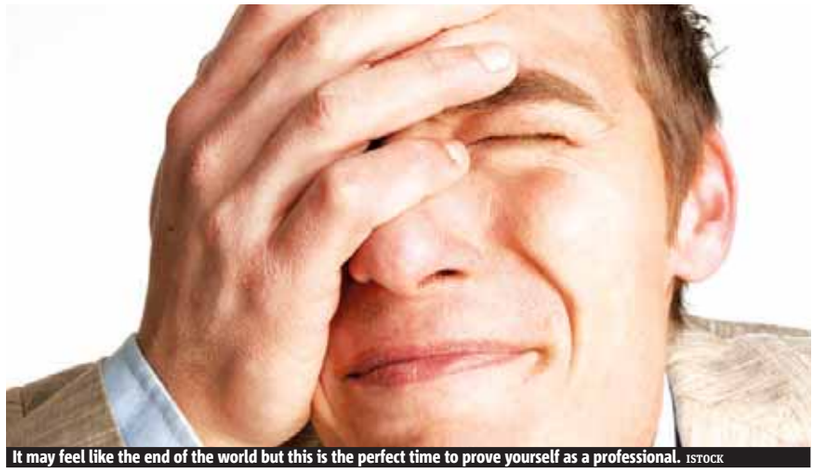
The dos and don'ts of dealing with a d'oh!



It may feel like the end of the world but this is the perfect time to prove yourself as a professional. ISTOCK

Mending your first mistake. Turn that blunder into an opportunity to impress your business buds

MEGHAN GREAVES
TalentEgg.ca

Mistakes happen, especially when first hatching your career. There's a lot to learn, a new workplace "style" to adhere to, and a ton of egg-citing but sometimes challenging scenarios. It doesn't help that being a new hire can be nerve-wracking as well.

The good news is that it's more than likely that your employer will be understanding of your first "whoops" if you handle it properly. This is easy if you're equipped with the right skills. We did some research on how to overcome your first mistake at work and asked around to get more ideas.

Take responsibility

You've acknowledged that a mistake has been made, developed a solution and brought the situation to your manager. Now it's time to apologize.

- Your apology doesn't have to be an overwrought speech, but it should be genuine.
- Apologizing shows your employer right off the bat that you are being professional about the situation and gives him or her the confidence to believe that you will make it right.

Acknowledge that you've made a mistake

You've accidentally replied to everyone in a sensitive email, sent the wrong message or double-booked your boss.

The first thing to do is acknowledge the mistake. Don't sweep it under the rug for someone else to find. Owning up prevents the mistake from snowballing into a serious problem.

This is also the perfect time to take any responsible steps to reverse the mistake, if possible.

Advise your manager

The best thing to do after realizing that you have made a mistake and taking the proper steps to come up with a solution is to advise your manager.

This may be a scary thing, but telling your manager about a mistake is a lot less scary than being asked about it.

While no one likes mistakes, you need to believe that your manager will understand and appreciate your honesty.

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Baseball

Draft pick Dantzler hitting heavy for Canadians

The late-afternoon sun sizzled down on Scotiabank Field at Nat Bailey Stadium as onlookers watched L.B. Dantzler take batting practice.

The Vancouver Canadians first baseman ripped a pitch off the right-field wall. In other ballparks across the Class A Short-Season Northwest League, that might have cleared the fence. The Nat's reputation for decades has been that the ball doesn't carry.

"I haven't been able to get one out of here yet," Dantzler said before Tuesday's game against the Everett AquaSox.

The Toronto Blue Jays' 14th-round pick in this year's draft, Dantzler has had a fruitful first few months in professional baseball. His approach has changed from his college days with the South Carolina Gamecocks.

Entering play Tuesday, he led the Canadians in home runs (7), doubles (15) and was third on the team with a .317 batting average.

"At school, my coaches wanted me to pull the ball a lot more," he said.

"I've gotten here and finally gotten to hitting the ball the other way. I think that's been the biggest difference."

But it's the grind of the pro game that can be the greatest adjustment.

"Here it's no off-days. We've had three since I've been here and two have been used for bus trips," he said. "So that's the biggest thing, coming out mentally and physically ready to play every day."

CAM TUCKER/METRO

Darren Mattocks: 'I didn't miss a beat'

MLS. Forward could return to Whitecaps lineup three weeks after knee surgery

CAM TUCKER
cam.tucker@metronews.ca

Darren Mattocks says he doesn't want to force a comeback from recent surgery.

At the same time, there's no denying the possibility of his regaining a spot in the Vancouver Whitecaps lineup this weekend.

Mattocks underwent an operation to repair a meniscus tear in his right knee on July 25, but has been back training with the Whitecaps and could be available for the club's road meeting with the Colorado Rapids on Saturday.

"I didn't miss a beat," Mattocks said on Tuesday, following the club's training session at UBC.

"I did really well since coming back ... and that's really good. I felt even sharper than before, so that's really good. But I've still got a lot of work to do getting back (to) match fitness."

Mattocks' efforts of late have not gone unnoticed.

"He was fantastic today. That was probably the best training session he's ever had. Amazing," head coach Martin Rennie said.

Rennie will be facing some tricky lineup decisions for Saturday, as the Whitecaps go for their 11th win of the season, which would already match a club best set last year.

The Whitecaps are optimistic that Darren Mattocks, left, will return soon as he recovers from surgery to repair a meniscus tear in his right knee. JEFF VINNICK/GETTY IMAGES FILE

Back to it

"He was fantastic today. That was probably the best training session he's ever had."

Whitecaps head coach Martin Rennie on Darren Mattocks' return to practice

Striker Kenny Miller was called up to Scotland for an international friendly against England at London's Wembley Stadium on Wednesday.

Miller, 33, is expected to travel to Denver and could be available for selection. A decision on whether he plays will be made closer to game time.

If Miller can't go, either due to fatigue from travel or a knock suffered in the friendly versus England, Mattocks has again become an option.

"I've just got to ... continue to do what I've been doing and just work hard, stay humble and when my chance (comes), take it," Mattocks said.

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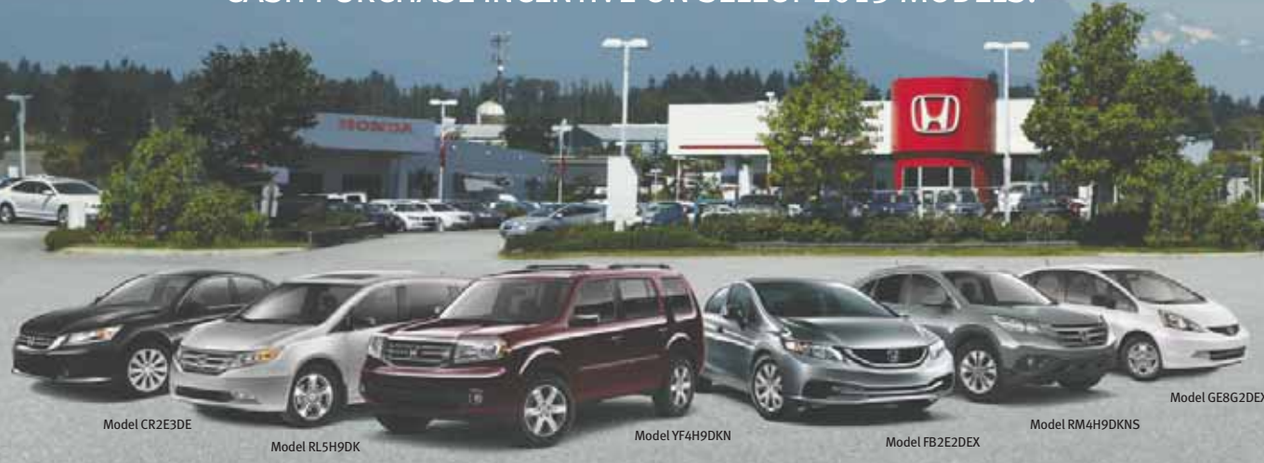

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2014 Ford Transit Wagon

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1 Mazda5
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Review. A fresh take on the minivan ... from Europe? Yes indeed

MALCOLM GUNN
wheelbasemedia.com

2014 Ford Transit Wagon

- **Type.** Four-door, front-wheel-drive compact van
- **Engines (hp).** 2.5-litre DOHC I4 (168, est.); 1.6-litre DOHC I4, turbocharged (173, est.)
- **Transmissions.** Six-speed automatic
- **Base price (incl. destination)** $27,500

Technology

Also available is SYNC with MyFord Touch, which is the automaker's latest voice-controlled infotainment and communications system, plus your selection of either cargo-van-style side-hinged rear doors or a more traditional liftgate.

Fuel Economy

Seeing as Ford is boasting better than 6.0 l/100 km highway rating for the turbo, 9.0 l/100 km in the city and 6.1 on the highway is a reasonable guess with the base 2.5 being a touch thirstier.

Design

The retiring Transit Connect's tall body was always better suited for work-van duty, while the new Transit Connect Wagon's stylish sheet metal seems far more car-like in looks and in application. In fact, it's a long overdue departure from the classic minivan shape.

Nowhere in Ford's press or promotional literature will you see the 2014 Transit Connect Wagon referred to as a minivan.

But one walk around this big-roofed rig with its dual-sliding side doors and up to seven passenger seating capacity is enough to confirm that "minivan" is the most relevant designation, even if it's from Europe.

The TC Wagon, which arrives in late 2013, is the junior-sized civilian offshoot of a series of new windowless commercial-vans heading to North America from Ford's factory in Spain. Unlike the Mazda, the TC Wagon will be offered in five and seven passenger sizes, separated by about 41 centimetres in overall length and in distance between the front and rear wheels. The pair replaces the original five-passenger Transit Connect van that arrived for the 2010 model year.

The five-passenger TC Wagon's just-right size is more esthetically pleasing, but for larger families the elongated seven-seat version will likely get the nod. Both are finished off as well as any other members of Ford's compact fleet, including the Focus sedan and hatchback and Escape small utility vehicle.

With three distinct trim levels — XL, XLT and Titanium — the TC Wagon can be spiced up just about any way you want, from utilitarian basic to full-on premium class transporter with leather seat coverings, king-size panoramic glass roof, a navigation system with a 6.5-inch (16.5-centimetre) screen, fancy wheels, upgraded sound system and other niceties.

In either case, the split-folding second-row — and the dual fore-and-aft-sliding third-row seats found in extended models — can be flattened for maximum stowage. The TC Wagon will accommodate up to 545 kilograms of cargo and tow up to 910 kilograms. Think personal water craft or ATV here.

Along with its compact silhouette, the TC Wagon promises to maintain a solid grip on fuel consumption by way of its engines. The starting point is a 2.5-litre four-cylinder, while a turbocharged 1.6-litre four-cylinder "EcoBoost" powerplant is optional.

Far from being just a cargo van with added windows and seats, the Transit Connect Wagon is nothing short of a fully turned-out utility hauler. Ford is keeping the starting prices to itself for now, but you'll likely be able to drive a short-wheelbase model off the lot for about $27,500, which would put the longer model at close to $30,000.

The TC Wagon represents a breakthrough of sorts in the minivan field, even if, categorically speaking, Ford would rather you refer to it as something other than a minivan.

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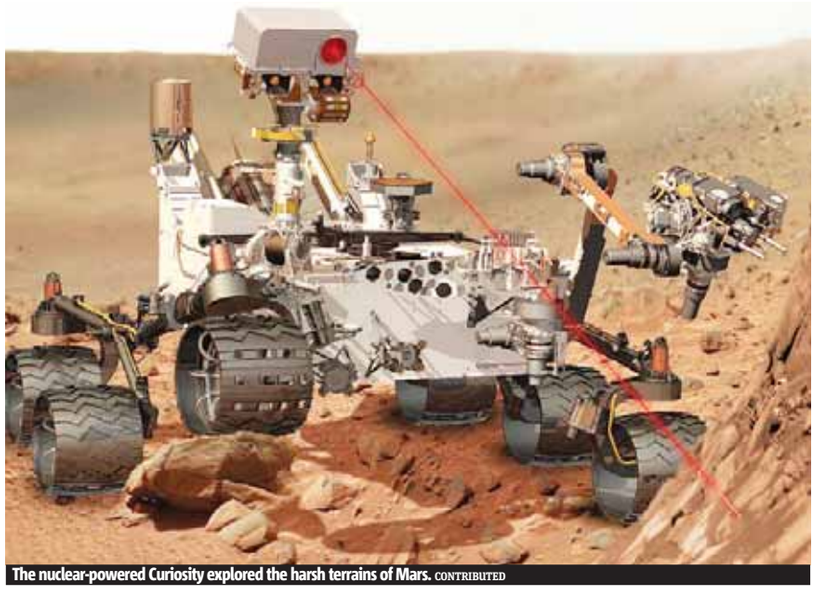
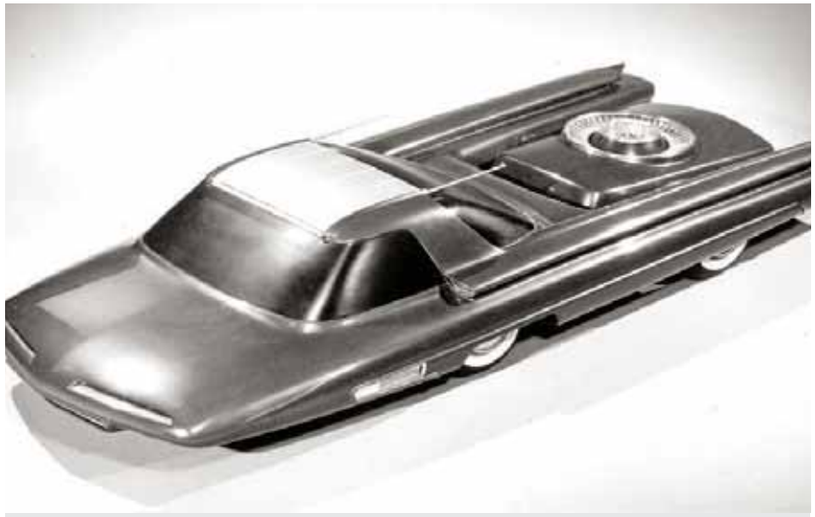
Sincerely curious about plutonium's potential

Autopilot. With the success of The Curiosity on Mars should we now look at nuclear power as a viable car fuel source?

AUTO PILOT
Mike Goetz
drive@metronews.ca



The nuclear-powered Curiosity explored the harsh terrains of Mars. CONTRIBUTED



The 1958 Ford Nucleon. PHOTO: FORD MOTOR COMPANY

Earlier this month, NASA's latest robotic rover, Curiosity, celebrated its first anniversary of roaming around the planet Mars. So far it's been a great road trip.

No tickets. Lots of fun photo opportunities. Lots of great rocks to pulverize with its lasers. Only one temporary breakdown.

For sure, the technology on this thing is just out of this world. Consider the six wheels, each with an independent drive motor, the instruments that can analyze rock formations, before and after the lasers zap them into a state of plasma, and the powerful jack-hammer located at the end of its six-foot robotic arm.

But the technology that really gets me going is its power source, otherwise known as the Multi-Mission Radioisotope Thermoelectric Generator (MMRTG). Basically it's a nuclear thing, using non-weapon grade plutonium known as Plutonium 238.

The heat given off by plutonium's alpha rays can be used to keep things warm, and can be converted into lots and lots of electricity.

The other two Mars rovers, Spirit and Opportunity, run on solar energy, but NASA felt nuclear was the better option for Curiosity's rock-analyzing mission, which called for power-hungry tools, and lots of travelling in winter (dark and cold) and through dusty territory (dust on solar panels).

NASA also uses an MMRTG for fuelling the probe currently on its way to Pluto.

Look, I'm no nuclear scientist, couldn't even play one on regional cable TV programming, but I'm pretty sure Curiosity is the only "vehicle" ever successfully fuelled by plutonium. Sure there are lots of nuclear-powered submarines and air craft carriers out there, and there's always the time-travelling DeLorean in Back to the Future, but after that the pickings get smaller than atom particles.

I don't believe Curiosity's "Check Engine" light came on once. Should we reconsider atomic cars, now that Curiosity has been so successful and reliable?

Well, to keep the discussion going, here's a short list of the pros and cons of powering future vehicles with plutonium-based thermoelectric generators:

Let's go plutonium!

- Best name ever for a vehicle fuel.
- No more fill-ups. Plutonium 238 has a half-life of 87.7 years, and should outlast your Subaru no problem.
- Comes in a lovely shade of glowing apricot.

Let's not go plutonium!

- Drivers and passengers need to wear heavy and uncomfortable anti-radiation armour.
- It's pricey and rare. NASA's looking for $30 million to re-start Plutonium 238 production, to top up dwindling supplies. NASA hopes to make three pounds per year.
- Could lead to more car thefts, as plutonium is fanatically and historically coveted by nefarious international villain types.
- Auto technicians at Canadian Tire will require additional training.

Horoscopes

♈ Aries
March 21 - April 20
You may have big plans and big expectations but keep a sense of perspective. If you let your enthusiasm race too far ahead, you may make a mistake that slows you right down again. Get the balance right.

♉ Taurus
April 21 - May 21
You have what it takes to succeed but there is a touch of doubt in your mind that keeps you from giving your all. What happens today will remind you that doubt can be overcome.

♊ Gemini
May 22 - June 21
You are finding it hard to believe in yourself but it doesn't matter. What counts is that others believe in you, and they do. Take it easy today. You have nothing to prove.

♋ Cancer
June 22 - July 23
Someone you meet socially will praise you to the skies and tell you what a fine human being you are but your intuition warns they are not to be trusted. It's a trick to lull you into a false sense of security.

♌ Leo
July 24 - Aug. 23
What you are worrying about is of no importance. Cosmic activity in the most sensitive area of your chart may make it seem as if the world is against you but it's not true.

♍ Virgo
Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
Someone in a position of power will try to force you to do something you don't agree with today but they won't succeed. Stand your ground and refuse to do anything that does not meet your standards.

♎ Libra
Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
It's good to be reminded of your limits and what happens over the next 24 hours will stop you in your tracks and balance out a mistake of some kind. Next time, don't go over the top so quickly.

♏ Scorpio
Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
Let your rivals and enemies have the last word today. The yapping they do has very little effect, so why waste your time reacting to it? Save your energy and put it to better use.

♐ Sagittarius
Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
There is nothing wrong with your plans but some people will find fault with them. Ignore the critics and carry on as you are. That will annoy them far more than if you get involved in a war of words.

♑ Capricorn
Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
Someone you have to deal with today won't be in the best of moods but don't let their negativity rub off on you. When they see that their doom and gloom act is having no effect they will give up on it.

♒ Aquarius
Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
According to the planets what other people tell you is "the truth" and what is really the truth are two different things. Take everything you are told today, especially by "experts", with a large pinch of salt.

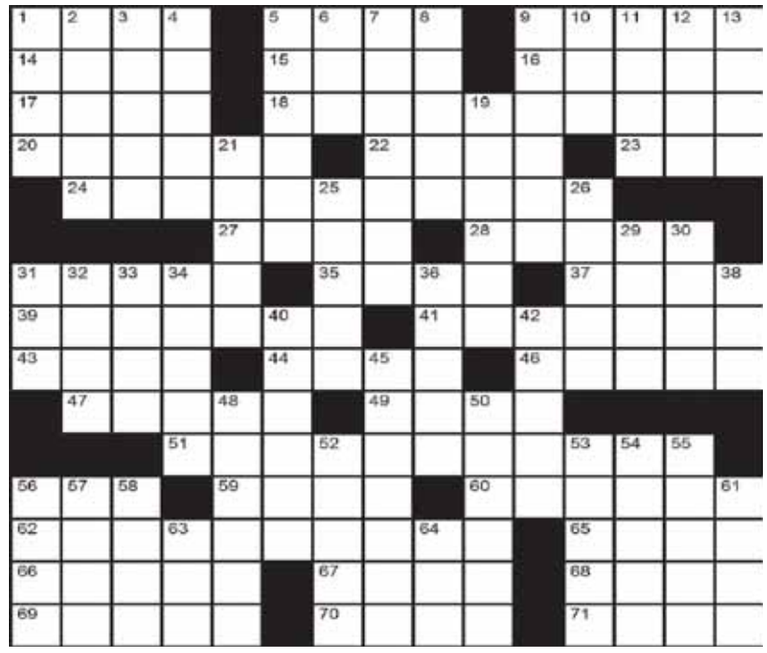
♓ Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
Try not to say anything that might be taken the wrong way by people who have the power to make life tough for you.

SALLY BROMPTON

Crossword: Canada Across and Down

See today's answers at metronews.ca/answers.

BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN



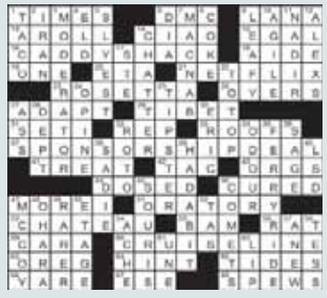
Across

1. "Best Song __" by One Direction
5. Cosmetic surgery procedure, commonly
9. Flavour
14. Cleave
15. "Walk Like _ __" by The Four Seasons
16. Extreme
17. E-Mail junk
18. Montreal's Expo 67, for one: 2 wds.
20. Boredom
22. Nautical ropes
23. Driver's li'l navigation aid
24. Like #48-Down's roof
27. Chew at
28. Lone Star State resident
31. Dishonour
35. Michael Jackson's second wife, Debbie __
37. Particular plant
39. Guernica artist
41. Skirt feature
43. Mr. Anthopoulos, Toronto Blue Jays GM
44. Village People hit
46. Furry mammal that can swim
47. Baseball base
49. Rock group's blasters
51. Chute __ (Very high waterfall in Quebec)
56. Sibling to sis'
59. Equipment
60. Refuge
62. Video game series: 2 wds.
65. Create
66. Helicopter part
67. Biblical birthright trader
68. Some athletes, e.g.
69. MuchMusic trophies, commonly
70. Quebec singer Mr. Simard
71. Feathered farm females

Down

1. Once, poetically
2. Venomous snake
3. Sidestep
4. Send payment
5. Sheriff, for one
6. Texting point-of-view
7. Movie sequel installment: 2 wds.
8. Songbook standard: "It's ___ Paper Moon"
9. Skirmish
10. The planet Melmac alien
11. Male deer
12. Stumble
13. Sense organs
19. Creditor, informally
21. Recommends strongly
25. Ricochet shot in billiards
26. Glorify
29. Dismounted
30. __ the wiser
31. Sauna site
32. To the __ (Fully)
33. Banda __ (City in Sumatra in Indonesia)
34. Men's magazine; or, saying
36. Classic toys company, __-_
38. Always, in verse
40. Locale on Cape Breton Island
42. Ten Commandments receiver
45. Alberta city southeast of Edmonton
48. Toronto Blue Jays home, __ Centre
50. Czech Republic capital
52. Giver's opposite
53. Mythical maiden
54. Ireland's County __
55. __ Gold (Type of potato)
56. Apartment listing abbr.
57. Leeway
58. According to a-ha, where the sun always shines: 2 wds.
61. Predicament
63. Tree in Hawaii
64. Grandma

Yesterday's Crossword



Sudoku

How to play
Fill in the grid, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved.

1								4
	5	4				2	7	
			8	4	2			
		6	5	9	7	8		
5	7						6	3
		9	6	1	3	7		
			3	2	9			
	2	3				1	5	
9								2

Yesterday's Sudoku

4	9	3	1	6	8	2	7	5
8	7	6	2	9	5	4	1	3
2	1	5	4	7	3	6	8	9
3	8	2	5	4	9	1	6	7
1	6	7	8	3	2	5	9	4
9	5	4	6	1	7	8	3	2
6	4	9	7	2	1	3	5	8
7	2	8	3	5	6	9	4	1
5	3	1	9	8	4	7	2	6

Today
22°/17°
Partly sunny
Thursday
22°/17°
Cloudy
Know what the weather will be 14 days from now.
Check the 14 day trend.
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